

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COPENH 03768 081702Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-01
INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-20 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 OES-07 DOE-15 SOE-02
NRC-07 /106 W

-----117237 091343Z /50

R 081602Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6657

UNCLAS COPENHAGEN 3768

E.O.: 11652: N/A
TAGS: BENC, EINV, DA
SUBJ: MAJOR PROJECTS: STATUS REPORT

REFS: (A) COPENHAGEN A-1; (B) COPENHAGEN A-2; (C) COPENHAGEN
A-8; (D) COPENHAGEN A-12

SUMMARY: THE DANISH GOVERNMENT RECENTLY PRESENTED ITS INVESTMENT PLAN TO PARLIAMENT FOR THE PERIOD THROUGH 1985. PARLIAMENT COMMENTED ON IT IN A DEBATE ON MAY 24, BRINGING CLARIFICATION TO THE STATUS OF AMBITIOUS PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS PLANNED OR IN PROGRESS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE DANISH GOVERNMENT RECENTLY INTRODUCED TO PARLIAMENT ITS PLAN FOR MAJOR INVESTMENTS THROUGH 1985. THE PLAN, WHICH IS BASED UPON A STUDY BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, WAS DEBATED IN PARLIAMENT ON MAY 24, WHERE PARTY LEADERS VOICED THEIR POSITIONS ON ITS CONTENTS.

2. THE DEBATE BROUGHT CLARIFICATION TO THE STATUS OF SOME OF THE MAJOR PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS, IN PROGRESS OR PLANNED. THEY ARE DESCRIBED BELOW:

A. THE GREAT BELT BRIDGE

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PAGE 02 COPENH 03768 081702Z

DENMARK'S MOST AMBITIOUS PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT, ESTIMATED AT OVER DOLLARS 1 BILLION, IS IN PROGRESS. DESPITE THIS, THERE HAS BEEN, AND STILL IS, CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC DEBATE OVER THE FEASIBILITY OF THIS COSTLY VENTURE. THE PARLIAMENT DEBATE REVEALED THAT THERE IS STILL A MAJORITY IN FAVOR OF COMPLETING THE BRIDGE. STOPPING THE PROJECT WOULD REQUIRE A NEW ACT TO

ANNUAL THE PRESENT ACT TO BUILD THE BRIDGE. THE CONTRACT FOR THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WORKS IS PLANNED TO BE SIGNED ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1978. THIS PHASE INVOLVES WORKS ESTIMATED AT DOLLARS 20 MILLION. IT WAS AGREED IN PARLIAMENT THAT WHEN THIS CONTRACT IS SIGNED, THERE IS "NO WAY BACK". THUS, OPPONENTS WOULD HAVE TO CALL PARLIAMENT INTO AN EXTRA SESSION (PARLIAMENT IS NOW CLOSED UNTIL OCTOBER) BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1 TO PASS LEGISLATION TO STOP THE BRIDGE. SUCH ACTION APPEARS TO BE IMPROBABLE.

B. NATURAL GAS

AS DESCRIBED BY REF C AND PREVIOUS MESSAGES, DENMARK HAS NO NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION NET TO UTILIZE ITS NORTH SEA DEPOSITS. DENMARK IS TOTALLY DEPENDENT UPON FOREIGN SUPPLIES FOR ITS ENERGY NEEDS. THEREFORE THE GOVERNMENT, SUPPORTED BY PARLIAMENTARIANS TO THE LEFT, HAS ADVOCATED THE INTRODUCTION OF A GOVERNMENT-OPERATED NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION NETWORK. ITS COST IS ESTIMATED AT SOME DOLLARS 1.5 BILLION. THE DEBATE INDICATED A SLIGHT MAJORITY IN FAVOR OF THE GOVERNMENT'S NATURAL GAS POSITION. A DECISION ON GOING AHEAD, HOWEVER, HAS NOW BEEN POSTPONED TO THE FALL SESSION. IF PASSED, THE PROJECT SHOULD START IN 1981.

C. NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF
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PAGE 03 COPENH 03768 081702Z

NUCLEAR POWER SHOULD BE POSTPONED TO A FUTURE (UNSPECIFIED) DATE. THE GOVERNMENT FOUND A MAJORITY FOR ITS POSITION, MAINLY FROM THE LEFT.

D. NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON SALTHOLM; BRIDGE/TUNNEL TO SWEDEN.

THE INVESTMENT PLAN DOES NOT CONTAIN FUNDS FOR THE PROPOSED NEW AIRPORT ON SALTHOLM NOR THE TUNNEL AND BRIDGE BETWEEN DENMARK AND SWEDEN (SEE REF B). ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT, THESE PROJECTS ARE NOW CONSIDERED INACTIVE.

3. THE GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT PLAN'S OVERALL ECONOMIC IMPACT WILL BE DISCUSSED IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, INVESTMENT PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978COPENH03768
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780241-0855
Format: TEL
From: COPENHAGEN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780683/aaaacsxt.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3e36408f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 COPENHAGEN A-1, 78 COPENHAGEN A-2
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2442730
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAJOR PROJECTS: STATUS REPORT
TAGS: BENC, EINV, DA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3e36408f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014